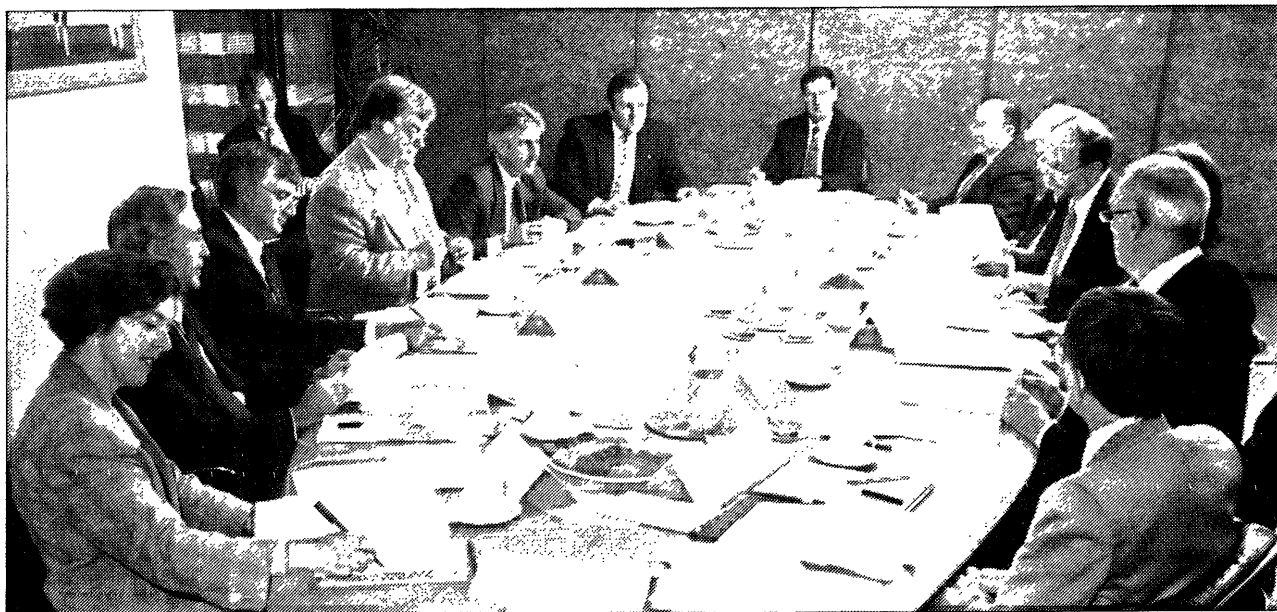


FIRST MEETING OF BROADBAND SERVICES GROUP



Members of the Broadband Group at their first meeting in Sydney on 22 December 1993 (moving around the table from the right): Dr Denis Cooper, Bruce Gyngell, Alan Horsley, Gerry Moriarty, Dr Ian Reinecke, Alf Forster, Trevor Wisemantel, Dr Laurie Mackechnie, John Souter (Secretariat), Brian Johns (Chairman), Geoff Luther (Secretariat), Ross Ramsay, Associate Professor Patricia Gillard. (At rear) David Watson.

Access by Australians to the next wave of communication-based services is a key issue for the Broadband Services Expert Group, according to Mr Brian Johns, Group Chairman.

The group's task is to examine and report to the Government on the pre-conditions for the widespread delivery of such services - which include interactive television, video on demand, home shopping and banking, video phones and electronic mail - to Australian businesses, homes and schools.

'The group will explore what consumer demand is for the range of new information services and which services might be provided,' Mr Johns said, when opening the group's first meeting on 22 December at the ABA.

He said it was also important to

examine the technological means for delivery of services, the time frame for doing this and possible funding mechanisms.

'This inquiry is also looking at the "information highway" for service delivery. This will range from multichannel cable television, interactive television and high definition television to electronic newspapers and high speed data transfer, to and from the home and between businesses.'

Mr Johns said a key task was to discuss how to match emerging technological opportunities with community aspirations: 'There is a danger that too much of the dialogue about communications technology will continue to be dominated by technocrats and suppliers.'

continued on p. 2

This Month:

- 3 Q&A - Research**
- 5 Planning meetings**
- 6 New licensing arrangements**
- 9 Racing narrowcasting licence period extended**
- 10 The wave of the future**
- 13 STAR TV**
- 15 Review**
- 16 Programs classified C and P**
- 16 State offices close**
- 17 Documentary conference report**
- 18 New in the library**

He said the inquiry would look at this issue by testing proposals from the communications industry, carriers, media, computer companies and manufacturers against the opportunities and implications for industrial markets, the operations of small businesses, the delivery of community services and the everyday life of millions of Australian households.

Mr Johns said the inquiry presented an opportunity to influence the shaping of a policy environment which encourages the community to take into its own hands the new opportunities presented by emerging communications technologies.

'The government has made clear that it will be looking to the group's report to help it provide Australia with the opportunity to develop a leading edge in communications infrastructure. An innovative society will be a competitive society,' he said.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

The inquiry will examine the technical, economic and commercial preconditions for the widespread delivery of broadband services to homes, businesses and schools in Australia. It will consider:

1. current and likely future broadband services and the customer demand for these services;
2. the relative costs/benefits of delivery by optic fibre compared to other means, drawing on local and overseas experience;
3. the extent to which broadband services may be delivered by technologies other than optical fibre or through a staged evolution of technologies;
4. industry development and export opportunities, including the potential for increased employment;
5. the degree to which industry will be able to take advantage of the oppor-

- tunities presented; and
6. the potential benefits to and impact on the Australian community of the availability of new broadband services.

The inquiry will also examine:

7. the research and development effort required;
8. the educational and training requirements for economic use of the proposed services options;
9. the funding mechanisms for investment in such services; and
10. the role of international standards.

The inquiry will:

11. identify options for co-operation among relevant interest groups and
12. an appropriate role for government within the context of existing telecommunications policy.

The group has been asked to submit a draft report by mid 1994 and to table a final report with the Government before the end of 1994.

The Broadband Group

Chairman

Mr Brian Johns
Chairman
Australian Broadcasting Authority

Dr Laurie Mackenzie
Group General Manager
AWA Limited

Members

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GE Information Services

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Optus Communications

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